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Title Slide: Data Collected Through the ECLS-B

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The ECLS-B collected a wealth of data from children, their families, and their early care and education settings.

This module provides more detailed information about some of the topics and components of the study described within the introductory module. Specifically, this module focuses on the early care and education data collected through the ECLS-B.

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The early care and education components were a significant aspect of the ECLS-B data collections and, as a result, there is much information about children's early nonparental care and education available for users on the data file.

NCES studies classify early nonparental care and education into two broad types: home-based and center-based. Home-based care is any care provided in a private home, which could be the child's home or another home. Center-based care is care provided in a center-setting such as a day care, nursery school, preschool, prekindergarten or a Head Start program. Home-based care is further divided into relative care and nonrelative care, resulting in three main types of care for which data are collected. Relative care includes care provided by anyone who is related to the child other than a parent, and nonrelative care includes care from anyone unrelated to the child that is provided in a private home. According to this classification scheme, nonrelative care includes care such as that provided by a neighbor, by a live-in au pair or nanny, or in a family day care business run out of someone's private home. Additionally, the ECLS-B collected information only on regular child care arrangements, meaning those that occurred on a regular basis. Information was not collected about occasional babysitting; parents were specifically instructed not to include occasional babysitting. Also, parents were told to include all regular arrangements, whether or not there was a charge or fee for them.

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There are several sources of information on early care and education. The first source of information is the parent interview. Parents were asked about their child's regular care and education arrangements in every round of data collection. From the 2-year data collection onward, parents of the children with at least one regular arrangement were asked for permission to contact the provider who provided the most care to the child in order to conduct a telephone interview. The telephone interviews were used to obtain information about the children's care settings and care providers directly from the providers themselves. The telephone interviews were designed to collect data on all types of care and education arrangements, from prekindergarten programs to more informal care provided by a grandparent on a regular basis.

Data Collected Through the ECLS-B: Early Care and Education Data

A telephone interview for before- and after-school care providers, referred to as the Wrap-around Care Provider interview, or WECEP, was introduced in the kindergarten 2006 round of data collection for children who were in kindergarten. The Early Care and Education Provider interview, or ECEP, was also fielded in that round for children who were not yet in kindergarten.

For a subsample of children in regular early care and education, the 2-year and preschool rounds of data collection included an observation component designed to assess the quality of the early care and education environment. This observation was conducted by a trained observer in the care settings of a subsample of children with nonparental early care and education arrangements. Both structural indicators of quality, for example child-adult ratios, group size, and caregiver qualifications, and process indicators of quality, for example, caregiver-child interactions, exposure to materials and activities, and discipline style, were obtained. During the observation, the center director was asked to complete a hard-copy questionnaire with questions about the characteristics of the center.

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Information about children's early child care and education arrangements was collected in the Child Care, or CC, section of the parent interview. The section began with questions about which types of care and education the child received, how many arrangements of each of the three types the child had, and the age at which the child first began receiving each type of care.

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Once the children's care arrangements were identified, questions about things such as the location of the care, the hours and days per week in care, the number of children and adults in the arrangement, the age the child was when that particular arrangement began, and the language the provider used most when caring for children were asked for the arrangement of each type in which the child spent the most time. As mentioned earlier, there are three types of settings asked about in the ECLS-B – center-based programs, care provided by a nonrelative, and care provided by a relative. This detailed information was collected for up to three arrangements, specifically the primary arrangement of each of these types, for each child.

Detail may not have been collected about the arrangements in which the child spent the most time across all types of care if the child spent more time in an arrangement of one type than he or she did in an arrangement of another type but the arrangement with more hours was not the primary arrangement of that type. For example, if a child spent 15 hours in one center-based arrangement, 10 hours in a second center-based arrangement, and 5 hours in a relative care arrangement, detail would have been collected about the 15-hour center-based arrangement and the relative care arrangement, even though the child spent more time in the 10-hour center-based arrangement than with the relative.

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Parents were asked several questions about fees paid for care and any financial assistance they received for care, but there are some issues about the way such information was asked that should be kept in mind when using these data. Regarding financial assistance for care, parents were asked if they received money to help pay for any arrangement from a variety of sources, including a relative, a social service or welfare agency, an employer, or someone else. This information was asked generally, so it cannot be linked to a particular arrangement unless the child only had one arrangement of a given type. In terms of the amount paid for care, only an estimate of household expenses for the arrangements in which the child spent the most time can be calculated from the data. It is not possible to calculate a total cost of care, because parents were not asked how much financial assistance they received and they were not asked the amount paid for care arrangements other than the ones in which their child spent the most time.

In contrast to cost, it is possible to calculate the total hours per week a child spent across all care and education arrangements because parents were asked how much time children spent in arrangements other than their primary arrangements.

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The Child Care Provider Survey, or CCP for short, was fielded in the 2-year data collection. The Early Care and Education Provider Survey, or ECEP for short, was fielded in the preschool and kindergarten data collections. The CCP and the ECEP were largely the same survey. All cases for which parents reported that a child was cared for by someone other than a parent on a regular basis (that is, at least once per week) were eligible for the Child Care Provider telephone interview in the 2-year collection. In the preschool collection, the criterion that the child had to be in care for at least one hour per week was implemented.

The provider who cared for the child for the greatest number of hours a week was selected for the interview, which was conducted over the telephone. Contact information for the providers was collected from parents who agreed to provide it. If the child spent equal time with two different care providers, one of the providers was sampled either randomly or with a preference depending on the round of data collection. More information about the selection criteria is available in the technical documentation for the study. Interviews were conducted with both home-based and center-based providers.

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The care provider interviews collected information on a variety of topics, including the providers' background, beliefs, practices, and attitudes, the learning environment they provided for children in their care, the characteristics of other children they cared for, the ECLS-B child's development, parents' involvement in the care setting, and the caregiver's relationship with the child. There were two main paths through the interview,

one for home-based providers and one for center-based providers. Within the center-based path, there were two parts to the interview with two different respondents. The center director was the initial point of contact with the center and completed the director portion of the interview. The child's primary caregiver in the center completed the second portion of the interview. The content of the provider interview was similar for both home-based and center-based interviews, but some of the questions were tailored to assure that the questions asked were phrased to be appropriate for the type of care being asked about. Also, while the same general topics were covered in each round of data collection, the specific questions asked did vary somewhat across rounds.

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For center-based arrangements, the interview began with a section that had questions for the center director, who was the person the interviewer asked to speak to when first placing the call to the center. The center director section of the interview asked for information for which the director was considered to be the best reporter, specifically the characteristics of the center, staffing, and services provided at the center. At the end of the center director section, the director was asked to identify the person who provided the most care to the sampled child, and that person was then asked to complete the remainder of the interview questions, even if that person was not the primary care provider identified by the parent in the parent interview.

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In the 2-year and preschool rounds of the ECLS-B, the child care observation, which lasted between 3 and 3 ½ hours, was conducted only on a subsample of children due to the expense and burden associated with conducting in-field observations.

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Several criteria had to be met in order for a child's care and education arrangement to be eligible for observation. The first was a complete parent interview since it was within the parent interview that permission to observe the care setting was requested. The child also needed to be in the care arrangement for 10 or more hours per week, usually for a 2 ½ hour block of time during which the child was usually awake. These criteria were put in place for both measurement and practical reasons. It was necessary that the child be present and awake for a substantial amount of time because many of the measures were related to the child's experiences and interactions in the arrangement. Also, it would have been difficult to coordinate an observation if the child was in it for very limited or specific times. The care observation was not conducted for children living in Alaska or Hawaii due to the expense of sending observers to those states. Lastly, the language spoken in the setting had to be English or Spanish.

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There were several measures that were used to assess the quality of the care setting during the observation. To obtain an objective indicator of child/staff ratio and group size, observers recorded the number of children and adults in the setting. Three to six counts were taken during different types of activities that occurred naturally during the observation, for example during free play, group activities, and meals or snack time.

The Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale, or ITERS, and the Family Day Care Rating Scale, or FDCRS, are global ratings of child care quality based on structural features of the classroom and the caregiver's interaction with children. The ITERS was an appropriate measure to use in center-based settings for children younger than 30 months of age. In the preschool round of data collection, the study switched to using the Early Child Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition, or ECERS-R, which was developed by the same researchers who developed the ITERS and is an appropriate measure to use in center-based settings for children 30 months of age and older. The FDCRS has a similar format as the ITERS and ECERS-R, but the content of each scale is adapted to match the environment that each was designed to assess, that is home-based or center-based, respectively. With the help of the developers of these scales, some minor adaptations were made to the scales for use in the ECLS-B to reduce burden on caregivers and omit items that could be difficult for an observer without specialized background knowledge to rate. The FDCRS used in data collection assessed the adequacy of the care and education settings in five areas: space and furnishing for care and learning, basic care, language and reasoning, learning activities, and social development. The ITERS and ECERS used in data collection assessed the adequacy of the care and education settings in six areas: space and furnishings, personal care routines, language and reasoning, learning activities, interaction, and program structure.

The Arnett Caregiver Sensitivity Scale is a measure of the overall quality of a single provider's interactions with a group of children. Items in the scale are organized under five areas: positive relationships, or how warm and affectionate the provider is; punitiveness, that is whether the provider uses harsh methods for disciplining children; detachment, meaning whether the provider is uninvolved in what the children are doing (for example during routine activities) or whether the provider is physically removed from the setting activities; permissiveness, meaning whether the provider is too lenient or is not firm enough with the children; and prosocial interaction, meaning whether the provider encourages sharing and cooperation among children. Each item on the Arnett is rated on a 4-point scale indicating the extent to which the statement is characteristic of the caregiver. The Arnett complements the global ratings of child care quality because it evaluates only the child's primary care provider rather than all the caregivers and the child care setting.

Following the observation, the observer had an opportunity to reflect on his or her general impressions of the CCO and to note if it was a typical day and whether the sampled child was present during the observation. The observer rated the overall

positive relationship of the caregiver with the sampled child and with all the children, the child-centeredness of care, and his or her overall impression of the child care setting.

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As part of the observation study for center-based settings, a self-administered questionnaire was completed by the director of the center while the observation was taking place. This questionnaire provides additional information to enhance the information collected from the administrator in the center director portion of the center-based CCP or ECEP telephone interview on topics such as program and staff characteristics.

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Once the children moved to kindergarten, if they received care on a regular basis outside of school hours, a wrap-around care and education provider interview, or WECEP, was conducted to capture information about this care. Like the early care and education provider interview conducted for children before kindergarten, the WECEP interview was administered to providers in both home- and center-based arrangements. The child was eligible for this component of the data collection if he or she received regular nonparental care and education for at least five hours a week and was also in kindergarten.

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The Wrap-Around Care Provider interview was patterned after the Early Care and Education Provider interview and was designed to complement the Teacher Self-Administered Questionnaire, or TSAQ, for kindergarteners.

The questions in the teacher questionnaire and the questions in the WECEP interview together cover the same content that is included in the ECEP interview. The information collected across the teacher questionnaire and the WECEP interview describes the child's experience in a typical day for children in kindergarten, whereas the information collected in the ECEP interview describes the child's experience in a typical day for children who were not yet in kindergarten.

Both the ECEP interview and the TSAQ contain the same items designed to assess the child's social development and physical activity. They also share items related to class characteristics, the amount of time spent on different language and literacy activities, as well as on math activities, other characteristics of the instructional day such as the amount of time spent in recess or adult-directed activities, and computer use.

To avoid repetition and to ensure that the wording of questions was appropriate for the context in which the data were being collected, the TSAQ and the WECEP interview were designed to not share items, although some constructs are common to both. Both ask about the class composition and class activities, but the WECEP interview has items from the National Before and After Care Study, whereas the TSAQ has items from the ECLS-K and the ECEP interview.

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There are two composite variables in the data file that identify the child's primary child care arrangement, or the one in which the child spent the most time. Variable PRIMNW, which is spelled P-R-I-M-N-W, indicates the child's primary care and education arrangement as identified by parents in the parent interview. Variable PRMARR identifies the care arrangement that was selected for the care provider interview and, if sampled for the observation, the observation. The difference between these two variables is the treatment of children who received care in two or more arrangements for the same number of hours each week. These children are coded into a "multiple arrangements" category for variable PRIMNW, whereas variable PRMARR identifies which of those arrangements was selected for the additional early care and education components.

Sometimes parents' report of the primary child care type differed from the provider or observer reports of child care type. Analysts should check the data considerations section of the data file user's manual to read about the cases for which this discrepancy is evident.

When looking at Head Start arrangements, researchers should keep in mind that Head Start was not necessarily the child's primary care arrangement and, therefore, would not have been the arrangement selected for the provider interview and observation.

Lastly, the ECLS-B data are not generalizable to all child care programs. The unit of analysis for the ECLS-B is the child. The ECLS-B data should not be used to make statements about the state of child care in the United States.

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This module has provided you with more detailed information about some of the topics and components of the study described within the introductory module. Specifically, this module focused on the early care and education data collected through the ECLS-B study from children, their families, and their early care and education settings. The module's objectives and the resources provided throughout the module are summarized here for your reference.

You may now proceed to the next module in the series or exit the module.